



Guidance for Use of Promotional Items by State Entities

Issued by Office of Chief Marketing Officer, State of Vermont

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Promotional items such as pens, magnets, hats, shirts, pins, or clips – also referred to as giveaways – are commonly used to support marketing, education, and outreach efforts. State entities (agencies, departments, offices, programs, and other units of state government) use giveaways on occasion to promote awareness of their message among their target audiences. These tools are often used for events or trade shows and are considered an affordable method of promotion.

Use of these items as marketing tools is generally limited to programs that are heavily dependent on marketing to drive the operation of their program or service and that have direct relationships with consumers.

State entities are experiencing increasing pressure on budgets making it necessary to maximize the use of limited resources. In support of this need and consistent with the goal of efficient use of state funds for marketing activities, the Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) has developed guidance for the use of promotional items in marketing activity. This guidance is intended to help state entities carefully evaluate how promotional items are used in their marketing mix. It is the responsibility of the agency, department, or program head to understand and apply the guidance to their marketing efforts.

While the cost of promotional items typically falls under the threshold requiring CMO approval, you are encouraged to share your plans for using promotional items in your marketing activities.

The CMO will work with you to find a cost effective solution for your marketing needs.

Definitions

For the purposes of this guidance, “promotional items” include, but are not limited to, shirts, caps, and other articles of clothing, pens, writing implements, calendars, magnets, mugs, and other items bearing the logo of or otherwise identifying the donor.

Criteria for Use of Promotional Items

The use of promotional items in marketing activities should meet the following guidelines:

1. The item provides some utility to the recipient that is related to the mission of the agency, department, office, program or other unit of the executive branch of state government.
2. The item acts as an incentive to change the behavior of the recipient in a manner consistent with the goals of the agency, department, office, program or other unit of the executive branch of state government.
3. The item conveys a message or provides awareness or education to an intended recipient who is a member of the target audience for the agency, department, office, program or other unit of the executive branch of state government.